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SENATE OK'S ADM. RABORN AS CIA CHIEF

Native Texan Asked No Rude Questions

BY WILLARD EDWARDS

(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, April 22 — The

Senate today approved the nomination of a new chief of the nation's world-wide spying apparatus with the speed and virtual secrecy befitting such a post.

Retired Adm. William F. Raborn, 59, became director of the central intelligence agency within an hour after he appeared before the Senate armed services committee for questioning. Given unanimous committee indorsement, his nomination was rushed to the Senate floor where it was confirmed by unanimous consent, without a vote. Only a dozen senators were present.

Raborn, 59, is a bluff, backslapping navy veteran highly regarded in Congress. He has never had experience in high-level intelligence operations but he is a native-born Texan and has a Texan wife, a circumstance which did not hurt his prospects when President Johnson was seeking a successor to the retiring CIA director, John A. McCone.

Backed Johnson Ticket

He is also a loyal Democrat and was a booster of the Johnson-Humphrey ticket in last year's campaign. Since his retirement in September, 1963, he has been vice president of Aerojet-General, a California corporation. He told the committee he would sell any stock holdings which might involve him in a conflict of interest.

Red Raborn's popularity on Capitol hill rests on his record as director of special projects with the naval bureau of ordnance when he handled development of the Polaris nuclear submarine project. He often appeared before congressional committees and his manner earned him many friends.

No rude questions were asked about his lack of experience in the intelligence field when the Senate committee held a brief open session. When Sen. Jack Miller [R., Ia.] sought to learn the present relationship between CIA agents and American ambassadors abroad, acting chairman John Stennis [D., Miss.] whispered to Miller and Raborn was not required to answer.

Holds Closed Session

Soon after, the committee went into closed session. Miller said later he was satisfied by Raborn's responses to questions based upon reports of frequent clashes between CIA agents and American diplomats.

The committee also approved unanimously the appointment of Richard F. Helms as deputy director of the CIA. It is open knowledge in Washington that Helms, an 18-year veteran and former officer of strategic services [OSS] agent, will handle all the technical and operational details of the huge organization which operates out of a 46 million dollar headquarters at nearby Langley, Va.

Raborn promised the committee that he would keep it "fully and currently" informed of CIA operations. Such information is restricted to a few highly placed senators and representatives, who are sworn never to disclose what they hear. Even the six (at least 20,000 employees) and the cost (estimated at 2 billions a year) of the spy agency are concealed from most of Congress and the public.

Raborn was not questioned about his dual role as head of the CIA and head of the United States intelligence board which evaluates all intelligence reports, both civilian and mili-

tary. The CIA has often been under fire for going far beyond its intended primary role as an intelligence gather and coordinating body. It has toppled governments and mounted revolutions, one of them culminating in the Bay of Pigs disaster.

After the closed session, Stennis said Raborn's status as the top intelligence official in the United States had been "clarified." Other sources said there would be no more conflict between the CIA and defense intelligence agencies because Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara was one of Raborn's most enthusiastic sponsors.

Sen. Mike Mansfield [D., Mont.], the majority leader who customarily handles Presidential nominations, permitted Sen. John Tower [R., Tex.] to maneuver the Raborn nomination on the floor. Tower had high praise for Raborn's management of the Polaris project.